

Mus'lin. (*Fabric.*) A bleached or unbleached thin white cotton cloth, unprinted and undyed; finer than calico. Varieties are known as Swiss, buke, mull, jaconet, lawn, saccharilla, harness, leno, nainsook, seerhand, foundation, cambric, cord, check, figured, long-cloth, tamboured, muslinet, organdie.

Muslins are so called from Moussol in India. First imported into England in 1670. Made in England, 1778 - 80. Other very different styles of fabric are now indifferently called muslins, and the term is used differently on the respective sides of the Atlantic.

At the London Exhibition in 1862, a few yards of English muslin were shown, woven from a thread .00216 of an inch in diameter, but the finest Dacca thread is only one quarter the size; and there is this essential difference, that the finest European muslins have little or no durability, whereas the Dacca muslins, of far finer quality, are strong and lasting. This is in part explained by the fact that the thread of the India fabric, being made by hand, is more closely twisted and compressed, — the number of twists to an inch in the best English being 68.8; the Indian, 110.1.

One pound of the finest Dacca thread is 250 miles in length. The most delicate pieces are transported in bamboo reeds, and a tube eighteen inches long and one inch in diameter will hold twenty-two square yards. One of the best pieces which found its way to England was ten yards long by one yard wide, weighed only three ounces two pennyweights, and could be passed through a very small ring. A Persian ambassador to India, on his return to his native country, once presented the king with a coconut-shell containing a turban sash sixty cubits long. The warp threads, in the best qualities, number from 1,000 to 1,800 in a piece one yard wide. Four square yards of some specimens weigh only 566 grains. The Emperor Aurungzebe reproved his daughter because, on a certain court occasion, the outline of her form could be distinctly seen through her dress. Her defense was that her covering consisted of seven garments.

To the fine and delicate Indian muslins the names of "webs of woven air," "dew of night," "running waters," etc., are given by the natives. They use the spinning-wheel generally for the ordinary fabrics, but the spindle still holds its place in the hands of the Hindoo woman when employed in spinning thread for the finer muslins. For these the Hindoo woman first cards her cotton with the jawbone of the *boa'ee* fish; she then separates the seeds by means of a small iron roller worked backwards and forwards upon a flat board. An equally small bow is used for bringing it to the state of a downy fleece, which is made up into small rolls to be held in the hand during the process of spinning. The apparatus required for this consists of a delicate iron spindle having a small ball of clay attached to it in order to give it sufficient weight in turning, and imbedded in a little clay there is a piece of hard shell, on which the spindle turns with the least degree of friction.

Attention is paid to the temperature of the air during the process of spinning, and the spinners in the dry climate of the northwest of India work under ground to secure a moist and uniform atmosphere.

The Hindoo's loom has a yarn-beam, a cloth-beam, heddle, swinging lathe, shuttle with an eye, treddles, and temple.